

CLAIMS

1. A method of providing a content, characterized in that:

when a content is transmitted to a user, an electronic water mark is embedded
5 in said content and at least information associated with the user, to whom said
content is to be transmitted, is added to said content; and
when said content is executed, said information associated with the user who
has received said content is checked at both transmitting and receiving ends, and the
execution of said content is allowed if and only if the result of the checking indicates
10 that said content is an authorized content.

2. A content providing server, characterized in that:

when a content is transmitted to a user, said content providing server embeds
an electronic water mark in said content and adds at least information associated
15 with the user to whom said content is to be transmitted to said content; and
when said content is executed, said content providing server checks said
information associated with the user to whom said content has been transmitted, and
gives to the user permission to execute said content if and only if the result of the
checking indicates that said content is an authorized content.

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3. A client terminal for use in a content providing infrastructure, characterized in
that:

said client terminal stores a content in which an embedded electronic
watermark is embedded and to which at least information associated with a user is
25 added; and

when said content is executed, said content is executed in accordance with
information which allows said content to be executed and which is supplied from a

content providing server if and only if said information associated with the user to whom said content has been provided indicates that said content is an authorized content.

5 4. A content providing system comprising:

 a content provider including a content server which stores plural kinds of digital contents and also including a user database in which information associated with a user is registered;

 at least one user terminal; and

10 a network for connecting said at least one user terminal to said content provider, wherein:

 said content provider includes a user database for registering, in advance, information associated with a user received from said at least one user terminal;

15 when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the requested content combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in said user database;

20 when the content transmitted from said content provider is executed at said user terminal, said user terminal checks whether the information associated with said user included in the content is consistent with the information stored in the user terminal; and

25 in accordance with the result of the checking performed at said user terminal, said content provider determines whether to transmit a content execution permission command to said user terminal.

5. A content providing system comprising:

a content provider including a content server which stores plural kinds of digital contents and also including a user database in which information associated with a user is registered;

5 at least one user terminal;

a network for connecting said at least one user terminal to said content provider, wherein

said content provider includes a user database for registering, in advance, information associated with a user received from said at least one user terminal;

10 when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the requested content combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in
15 said user database; and

when said content provided by said content provider is executed, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user, checks whether the information associated with said user resent from said user terminal is consistent with the information registered in said user database, and then
20 determines, in accordance with the result of the checking, whether to transmit a content execution permission command to said user terminal.

6. A content providing system according to one of Claims 4 and 5, wherein said information associated with the user includes at least a user name, a password, and a
25 device ID uniquely assigned to a device of said user.

7. A content providing system according to one of Claims 4 and 5, wherein:

when the information associated with a user received from a user terminal is registered, in advance, in the user database of said content provider, said content provider transmits to said user a card on which a card ID is stored; and

5 said information associated with the user includes at least a user name, a password, a device ID uniquely assigned to a device of said user, and said card ID.

8. A content providing system according to one of Claims 4 and 5, wherein:

10 said content provider further includes encryption means for encrypting the information associated with a user and embedding an electronic watermark in said content, and, when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider transmits the requested content after combining the requested content with the information associated with said user and with the electronic watermark; and

15 said content execution permission command transmitted from said content provider serves to remove said electronic watermark.

9. A content provider connected to at least one user terminal via a network, said content provider comprising:

20 a content server which stores plural kinds of digital contents; and a user database for registering, in advance, information associated with a user received from said at least one user terminal, wherein:

25 when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the requested content combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in said user database; and

when the content transmitted from said content provider is executed, checking is performed as to whether the information associated with said user included in said content is consistent with the information stored in the user terminal, and said content provider determines, in accordance with the result of the checking, 5 whether to transmit a content execution permission command to said user terminal.

10. A content provider connected to at least one user terminal via a network, said content provider comprising:

a content server which stores plural kinds of digital contents; and
10 a user database for registering, in advance, information associated with a user received from said at least one user terminal, wherein:

when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the requested content
15 combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in said user database; and

when said content transmitted from said content provider is executed, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated
20 with said user, checks whether the information associated with said user resent from said user terminal is consistent with the information registered in said user database, and then determines, in accordance with the result of the checking, whether to transmit a content execution permission command to said user terminal.

25 11. A content providing system according to one of Claims 9 and 10, wherein said information associated with the user includes at least a user name, a password, and a device ID uniquely assigned to a device of said user.

12. A content providing system according to one of Claims 9 and 10, wherein
when the information associated with a user received from a user terminal is
registered, in advance, in the user database of said content provider, said content
provider transmits to said user a card on which a card ID is stored; and
5 said information associated with the user includes at least a user name, a
password, a device ID uniquely assigned to a device of said user, and said card ID.

13. A content providing system according to one of Claims 9 and 10, wherein
10 said content provider further includes encryption means for encrypting the
information associated with a user and embedding an electronic watermark in said
content, and, when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for
providing a particular content, said content provider transmits the requested content
after combining the requested content with the information associated with said user
15 and with the electronic watermark; and
said content execution permission command transmitted from said content
provider serves to remove said electronic watermark.

14. A content providing method for use in a content providing system comprising a
20 content provider including a content server which stores plural kinds of digital
contents, at least one user terminal, and a network for connecting said at least one
user terminal to said content provider, said content providing method comprising:
a step of registering, in advance, information associated with a user received
from said at least one user terminal in a user database of said content provider;
25 a step in which when said content provider receives from a user terminal a
request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user
terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the

requested content combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in said user database;

5 a step in which when the content transmitted from said content provider is executed at said user terminal, said user terminal checks whether the information associated with said user included in the content is consistent with the information stored in the user terminal; and

10 a step in which, in accordance with the result of the checking performed at said user terminal, said content provider determines whether to transmit a content execution permission command to said user terminal.

15. A content providing method for use in a content providing system comprising a content provider including a content server which stores plural kinds of digital contents, at least one user terminal, and a network for connecting said at least one user terminal to said content provider, said content providing method comprising:

a step of registering, in advance, information associated with a user received from said at least one user terminal in a user database of said content provider;

20 a step in which when said content provider receives from a user terminal a request for providing a particular content, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits the requested content combined with said information associated with said user after checking that said information associated with said user is consistent with the information registered in said user database; and

25 a step in which when said content transmitted from said content provider is executed, said content provider requests said user terminal to resend the information associated with said user and transmits a content execution permission command to said user terminal after checking that the information associated with said user resent

from said user terminal is consistent with the information registered in said user database.